Creating Health & Nutrition

Overcoming Obstacles to a Healthy Change

Each New Year, many of us try to set new health goals. For many, losing weight and exercising more top the list. Yet, many people don’t ever seem to get past the idea of improving their diet or fitness level. Perhaps you are willing and ready to make the changes, but your spouse or family members can’t quite make the leap. How can you or your loved ones move from indecision, indifference, confusion, or frustration to making a commitment to a healthier lifestyle?

**Tip**

Rate the importance of the health changes you are considering and work on the most important one.

Behavioral researchers tell us that identifying where you are (or helping your loved ones) in the process of changing your health behaviors is the place to start. Below is a method to sort out your (or their) readiness for a change in behavior affecting health.

**Step 1: Rate Your Values**

Write down the top three things you value most in life:

1. ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

2. ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

3. ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

Where does good health for you and your family rate on your list of values?

**Step 2: Rate How Important It Is for You to Change**

Rate how important you feel it is for you and your family to make a health behavior change (0 = low and 10 = high):

Eat healthier
__

Eat more vegetables
__

Eat more fruits
__

Drink more water
__

Eat lower-fat foods
__

Exercise more
__

Make time for exercise
__

Lose excess weight
__

Stop smoking
__

Other (write your own desired health behavior changes and rate in the spaces provided):

Where does good health for you and your family rate on your list of values?

____

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For many people, reasons for making the change may include high blood pressure, diabetes, joint pain, sleep apnea or problems, heart disease, high cholesterol, breathing problems, frustration with appearance, how clothes fit or limited clothing choices, low stamina, and poor self-image.

If you rate yourself or your family’s level of importance low, ask yourself these questions:

- How will my life (or that of my family...
Step 3: Rate Your Confidence Level
Rate your level of confidence to make the health change (0 = low, 10 = high):

___ Eat healthier (fill in how as stated above or with your ideas)

___ Exercise more
___ Make time for exercise
___ Lose excess weight
___ Stop smoking
___ Other health behavior change(s) you listed above:

Step 4: Finding a New Direction
If you rated your confidence low or have had trouble making changes in the past, it’s time to look in a new direction. Many people cite lack of time or resources to make a change. Build your confidence by selecting a reputable, research-based program, book, or class. Your health care provider, area hospital, YMCA, and Penn State Extension all can guide you and offer many good resources, times, and places for diet and fitness programs. For more information on Penn State Extension programs, visit extension.psu.edu or call your Penn State Extension county office.

Sources